

# AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



## Lieutenant Colonel Jack "John" Joseph Dixon

Jack was born on April 11, 1920, Ishpeming, Michigan to John Thomas and Carrie Leffler Dixon. He graduated from Ishpeming High School in 1937 and attended Dunwoody Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota from 1937 to 1939, graduating as a draftsman. He worked in the U.S. Navy Department Map Division from 1940 to 1941. Jack enlisted in the Army Air Corps in March 1942 as a cadet.

Early training began in Kings City, California and proceeded to Chico and Stockton, California. In this period, he earned his commission as a Second Lieutenant. His first duty station as an officer was in January 1943 at MacDill Air Force base where he received training in the Martin Marauder B-26. Subsequent training in the B-24 Liberator bomber took him to Florida, Tennessee, Tucson, Arizona, Alamogordo, New Mexico, and Lincoln, Nebraska.

From Lincoln, he was assigned a crew of nine men and on December 22, 1943 he flew the southern route to South America, Africa, and finally the British Isles for assignment to the 387<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.

Jack had named his first plane (the Martin Marauder B-26) "The Patsy Ann" in honor of his wife Patricia Ann. He named his second plane (the B-24 Liberator) "The Patsy Ann II".

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Unfortunately, on the last leg of their trip to England, heavy fog made landing there impossible and they were rerouted to Scotland. When weather did not improve for several days, the crew was ordered to take the train to the base in England. In later years, Jack inquired about the whereabouts of "The Patsy Ann II" and found it had been shot down over Europe.

Jack and his crew made five successful bombing raids over Berlin, two over Fredrichshaven, one over Frankfort, and one over Munster, Germany. On April 8, 1944, in a raid over Brunswick, Germany, his plane was shot down. The co-pilot was killed in his seat and two other crew members were also killed. The remaining seven crew members parachuted out and, upon landing, were immediately surrounded by Germans. Jack was interrogated and eventually ended up at Stalag Luft I at Barth, Germany. He was a prisoner of war for 13 months. Liberation by the Russians occurred on May 1, 1945.

Jack was the recipient of two Air Medals and the Prisoner of War medal. He was a member of the Caterpillar Club, which signifies the escape from a disabled plane by parachute.

Jack was in the Army Air Corps Reserves during World War II and continued his service to his country in the United States Air Force Reserves. He retired as a Lt. Colonel on April 11, 1980. Colonel Dixon died on September 19, 1998 in Marquette and is buried in the Negaunee Cemetery, Negaunee, Michigan.

T J Mudge, Feb. 2004